

## **ADRIAN POLGLASE**

### **Professor of Surgery**

MB BS (Hons), MS, FRACS, FRCS (Eng), FRCS Ed, FACS

CABRINI MONASH UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

COLORECTAL SURGERY  
LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY  
COLONOSCOPY

A. L. POLGLASE PTY. LTD. A.C.N. 062 956 843

## **Colorectal - Malvern**

SUITE 20, CABRINI MEDICAL CENTRE  
ISABELLA STREET, MALVERN 3144  
TELEPHONE 9509 8233 FACSIMILE: 9509 0812  
PROVIDER NO 216484K  
AFTER HOURS: HOME 9824 7525  
CALL SERVICE: 9387 1000

EMAIL: [alp@colorectalmalvern.com.au](mailto:alp@colorectalmalvern.com.au)  
WEBSITE: [www.colorectalmalvern.com.au](http://www.colorectalmalvern.com.au)  
[www.colonoscopymalvern.com.au](http://www.colonoscopymalvern.com.au)  
[www.laparoscopymalvern.com.au](http://www.laparoscopymalvern.com.au)

### **WHAT IS INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE?**

The term Inflammatory Bowel Disease refers to the conditions known as “Ulcerative Colitis” or “Crohn’s disease or “Crohn’s colitis”. These conditions represent inflammation of the intestine, and in the case of Ulcerative colitis, only of the large bowel, whereas Crohn’s disease can affect any part of the intestine. The causes of ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease at this time are unknown, but it is likely that a number of congenital and acquired factors can be implicated in the cause of these diseases.

It is sometimes suggested that these disease are “stress related”. There is no evidence to support this contention, although stress may well be an aggravating factor, as can certain foods, for example, milk products in a small proportion of instances.

#### **Symptoms.**

Both Ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease can be associated with abdominal discomfort and diarrhoea, as well as bleeding from the bowel. In more severe cases blockages of the intestine can occur, and other parts of the body may also develop disorders, for example, certain forms of arthritis may be more common with bowel inflammation.

Patients with long-term severe colitis will in due course develop an increased risk of developing bowel cancer.

#### **Diagnosis of Inflammatory Bowel Disease.**

Ulcerative colitis can usually be diagnosed by examination of the large intestine including sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy (you’ll be provided with separate information on colonoscopy). Crohn’s disease may also be diagnosed this way, but often Crohn’s disease may be limited to the small intestine and x-rays of the intestine may be required to confirm the presence of this condition.

#### **Treatment**

Medical treatment is likely to control most patients with inflammatory bowel disease, and if symptoms are severe, cortisone may be necessary. In particularly severe cases, surgery may be required and one of a variety of operations may be necessary. Surgery has the potential to cure ulcerative colitis because the condition involves only part of the intestine, namely the large bowel. With Crohn’s disease however the condition can crop up in various parts of the intestine and is not curable by surgical resection. As a result, surgery in the treatment of Crohn’s disease is usually reserved only for the complications of the condition, rather than trying to achieve a cure. Undoubtedly in due course medication will be discovered which will cure both ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease.